

January 21, 2011 Meeting Highlights

Guiding Coalition members delved deeper into Alberta Education's 'Inspiring Action' document and discussed the desired 21st Century skills of an educated Albertan. Another important part of the meeting focused on reviewing and discussing comments that are being gathered from people in various roles throughout Chinook's Edge.

Honouring Voices

Members began the meeting by greeting our new student representative, Hanna Hicks, who is taking a blend of courses from Innisfail High and Innisfail Career High School. Here is a snippet of what we discussed:



Placemat exercise – As part of their 'homework', Guiding Coalition members were asked to bring back comments from their stakeholders in the field. They recorded the comments they had gathered to the question *'What message would you like brought back to the CESD Guiding Coalition'*.

Voices from our school leaders:

Our Chinook's Edge Leadership Team and the Superintendent's Advisory Team, who work to facilitate growth in our schools, identified what they felt should be the skills Chinook's Edge should prioritize throughout the division. The list of skills they came up with is very similar to those encompassed in the competencies that Alberta Education has identified in 'Inspiring Action'. Our school leaders feel personalized learning should be embedded in all competencies, and numeracy and literacy are at the heart of all skills. We need to all work from the same set of definitions.

How can people embrace change?

The Guiding Coalition members have been spending a great deal of time discussing not only their vision of what needs to be changed, but how change actually occurs. To work, this requires an entire paradigm shift and that will take a lot of time. This change won't just happen in our classrooms; it needs to happen in homes, at the Board table and at the government level. How can we allow rich classroom experiences as we provide quality instruction to our students and prepare them to meet success?



What do you feel should be included in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of an educated Albertan?

This was the second question our members posed to their stakeholders, and we are taking great care to document your responses accurately. As we review and categorize the data, common themes are becoming evident. Chat with Guiding Coalition members about this process and you'll be sure to hear their heartfelt engagement and their respect for the importance of their role.

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Where are we at?

We are:

- * Collating data
- * Collaborating
- * Listening
- * Discussing
- * Mulling around concepts

We are exactly where we're supposed to be!



Members are also providing structure around the volumes of information Kurt is bringing back from his visits to schools. Thank you for your reflection and great ideas! It is vital to this process.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The next two meetings of the Guiding Coalition will be day-long events. On February 18, we will continue reviewing the data that is being collected. Then on April 27, we will be bringing more stakeholders to the table as we analyze the information and begin the process of focusing our vision. Meanwhile, our members will continue supporting the process of extending this conversation into schools and classrooms, as they bring information from our meetings back to you and gather more of your thoughts to add to our discussions.

Working together – A simple bean bag toss provided a clear reminder of how important it is to work in sync and with clarity together.!



We are listening! Here's more of what we've been hearing:

- The biggest change needed is a change in thinking.
- We have to look at how we can best provide effective learning to each student and to entire groups of students.
- How can we address all learning needs within a busy classroom with diverse students who need and deserve individualized learning?
- Don't forget, we are already doing a good job!
- Lots of amazing things are going on in our schools.
- We need to increase awareness and engagement of parents who are such a big part of what's happening in our schools.
- As long as we are accountable to Alberta Education, we have to ensure what we're doing fits within their expectations, so our students are well prepared.
- We need permission to move forward and take risks for kids.
- We need to develop a better sense of what personalized learning might look like in our classrooms.
- Education isn't just about coming to school to get information.
- Kids are helping us see what learning can really look like.